

HOUSEKEEPING

A Guide to Caring For Your Home



**Harford County Housing Agency
15 South Main Street, Suite 106
Bel Air, Maryland 21014
410-638-3045 / FAX: 410-893-9816**

David R. Craig
County Executive



Shawn A. Kingston
Director

SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

These items are commonly used for cleaning:

- Bucket
- Sponges
- Broom and Dustpan
- Brush (for scrubbing floors and tile)
- Mop
- Rubber Gloves
- Toilet Brush
- Dusting Cloth
- Paper Towels
- Step Ladder
- Rake
- Pruning Shears or Hedge Clippers

These supplies are optional, but may be helpful:

- Vacuum Cleaner
- Wire Brush
- Work Gloves
- Extension Ladder





CLEANING PRODUCTS

When selecting a cleaning product, carefully read its product label. Be sure to choose a cleaner which is made specifically for the surface you will be cleaning (i.e., countertops, wood floors, etc.).

- Use an all-purpose household cleaner for most surfaces, including wood floors, vinyl/linoleum floors, countertops, walls, etc.
- Use a non-abrasive cleaner in the bathroom. This type of cleaner generally comes in spray bottles or cans.

For general cleaning, you may be able to make some of your own household cleaners. Try one of these mixtures:

- 1/3 cup of ammonia and 1 gallon of warm water
- 2 tablespoons of ammonia and 1 tablespoon of liquid dish detergent with 1 quart of water
- 2 tablespoons of baking soda and 1 pint of water

NOTE: Never mix ammonia with bleach or bleach cleansers.

FLOORS

CLEANING TILE, VINYL/LINOLEUM, AND WOOD FLOORS

Floors should be cleaned at least twice per month.

1. Vacuum or sweep floor.
2. Mix ½ cup floor cleaner or ammonia with a bucket of warm water. Mop the floor with this mixture.
3. When the water in the bucket becomes dirty, empty the bucket and mix fresh solution.
4. After mopping with the mixture, rinse the mop and mop the floor with plain warm water.





DUSTING

- Dust collects everywhere. Use a dust cloth to dust off tables, televisions, computer desks, window shades/blinds, lamp shades, etc.
- Always dust high surfaces before dusting low surfaces. For example, dust the top shelves of a bookshelf before the bottom shelves.
- Accumulated dust can aggravate allergies in many people. To reduce the amount of dust in your home, regularly dust your furniture and vacuum your carpets.



CARPETS AND RUGS

- Place door mats at entry doors to prevent dirt from being tracked into your home.
- Rugs should be shaken outside every week to remove dust and dirt.
- Rugs should be occasionally washed. When washing rugs, use cold water and a laundry detergent without bleach. Rugs can be hand washed in a large bucket, utility sink, or bathtub, or they can be washed in the washing machine on normal or gentle cycle. Line dry.
- To help carpets last longer, they should be regularly vacuumed or swept.

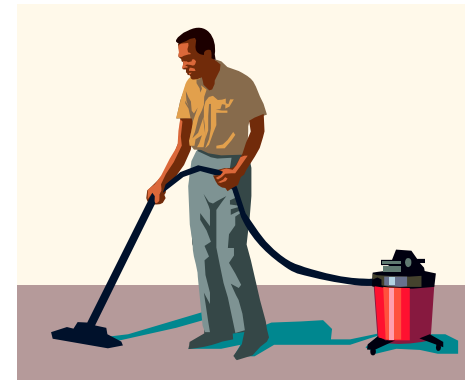


CARPETS AND RUGS

SHAMPOOING CARPETS

- Before shampooing, vacuum or sweep the carpet.
- Move furniture out of the area which will be shampooed.
- Clean carpet with a carpet cleaner or shampoo, or use a steam cleaner.
- Use carpet stain remover to clean any tough spots.

HINT: Steam cleaners can be rented at many grocery stores and drug stores.



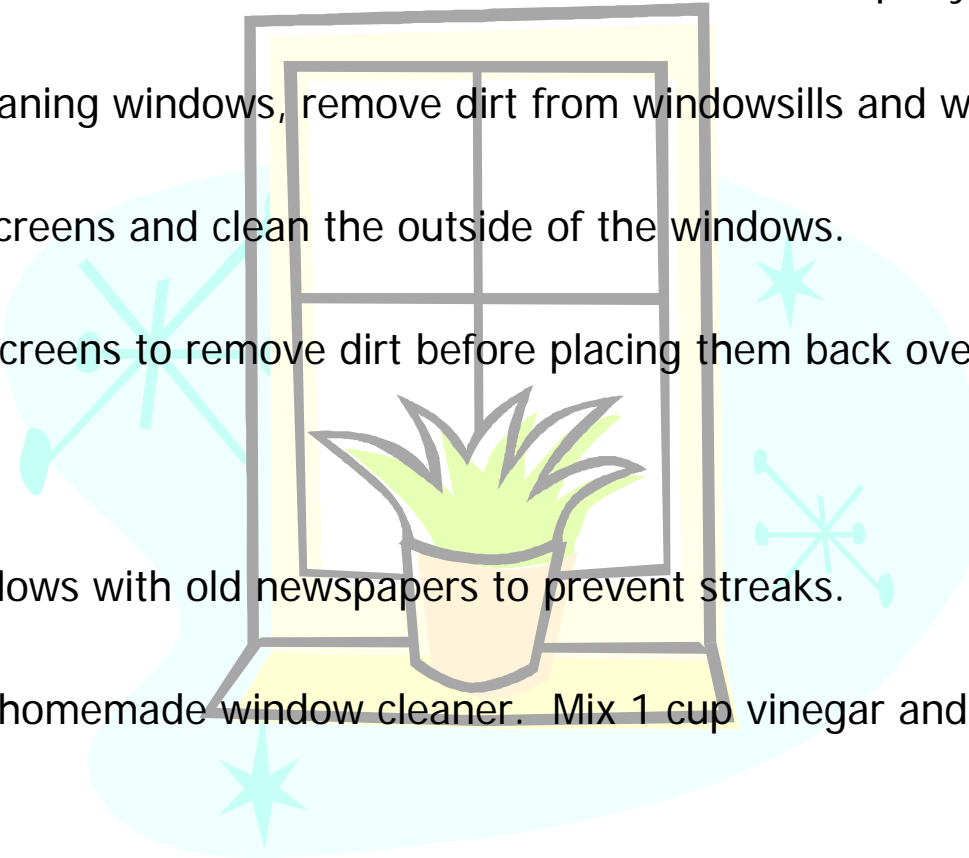


WINDOWS

- The outside of windows should be cleaned at least once per year.
- Before cleaning windows, remove dirt from windowsills and window panes.
- Remove screens and clean the outside of the windows.
- Hose off screens to remove dirt before placing them back over the windows.

HINTS:

- Wipe windows with old newspapers to prevent streaks.
- Try using homemade window cleaner. Mix 1 cup vinegar and 1 cup water.



BATHROOMS

- Bathrooms should be cleaned at least once per week.
- To clean the toilet, use rubber gloves, a sponge or toilet brush, and toilet bowl cleaner.
- Scrub all parts of the toilet, including inside of the bowl, outside of the bowl, seat (top and bottom), and the lid. The tank may also need to be cleaned.
- With an all-purpose cleaner or disinfecting bathroom cleaner, clean the countertop(s) and the sink(s).
- The floor should be mopped or scrubbed weekly.



BATHROOMS

- To clean the shower and bathtub, wear rubber gloves, and scrub shower walls and tub with a mold and mildew cleaner. Try using a homemade cleaner: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bleach and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water.
- Do not splash bleach onto your skin or in your eyes. After cleaning, rinse the shower and bathtub with cold water.
- Remember to clean out the drain strainer in the bathtub to prevent clogs.





BATHROOMS

CONTROLLING MOLD AND MILDEW

Damp places are prime spots for mold and mildew. To prevent mold and mildew from growing in your bathroom:

- Open a window or turn on the exhaust fan while showering or bathing. Do not turn off the fan or close the window until the mirror is no longer foggy.
- Wipe down the shower or bathtub with a sponge after use to soak up excess moisture.
- Leave the shower curtain or shower doors open when the shower is not in use.
- Leave the bathroom door open when the bathroom is not in use.



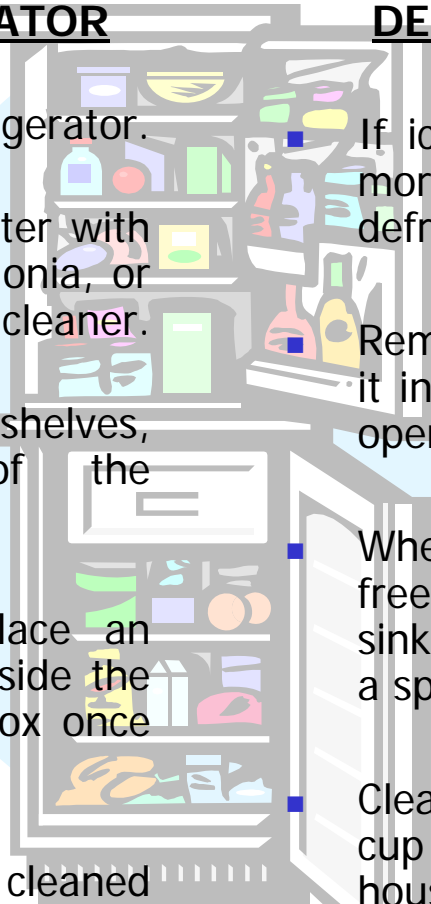
KITCHEN

CLEANING THE REFRIGERATOR

- Remove all items from refrigerator.
- Mix one small bucket of water with ¼ cup baking soda or ammonia, or general household cleaner.
- Use a sponge to clean all shelves, drawers, and walls of the refrigerator.
- To control food odors, place an open box of baking soda inside the refrigerator. Replace the box once every three months.
- The refrigerator should be cleaned twice per month.

DEFROSTING THE FREEZER

- If ice builds up to ½ inch thick or more, the freezer needs to be defrosted.
- Remove food from freezer and store it in a cooler. Turn freezer off and open its door to let it defrost.
- When ice begins to melt in the freezer, remove it and put it in a sink. Soak up excess wetness with a sponge.
- Clean freezer with a mixture of ¼ cup baking soda or ammonia, or household cleaner, and a small bucket of water.





KITCHEN



CLEANING THE STOVE

- Using a damp cloth, wipe off the hood of the stove to remove dust and stains.
- Remove burner plates, scrub them with a scouring pad, and wipe them clean with a wet cloth. Replace burners and wipe stove with a clean wet cloth.
- Immediately clean up any spills to prevent stains. The stove should be wiped clean every night.
- Always use paper towels or disposable wipes, as opposed to a sponge, when cleaning the kitchen. Sponges harbor germs, and the use of sponges increases the chance of cross contamination.



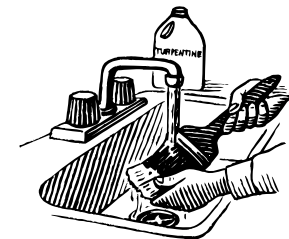
KITCHEN

COUNTERTOPS

- Kitchen countertops should be wiped clean after cooking any meals. Use a wet soapy cloth or a disinfecting wipe to clean the countertops.
- Wipe down the backsplash to remove any splatter from sauces or other liquids.
- If some areas of the countertop or backsplash have debris which is hard to remove, use a scouring pad and apply pressure to scrub away the debris.

SINK

- Spray a cleaning solution in the sink and use a cloth or scouring pad to scrub the sink.
- Wipe down the area behind the sink, as well as the faucet.
- If you have a garbage disposal, try putting a few lemon slices down the drain and turn on the disposal. The lemons will release a fresh scent.





KITCHEN

CONTROLLING INSECTS

- Bugs should be killed with bug killer the first time they are seen.
- Cabinets should be emptied and cleaned with general household cleaner.
- Holes in walls should be patched to prevent bugs from coming inside the home.
- Use bug killer or traps according to the package instructions.
- Bug killer or traps should continue to be used for two to three months after the bug problem seems to have ceased.

HINT: Store all food in covered containers and use a garbage can with a lid.



YARD AND HOME EXTERIOR

LAWN CARE

- Lawn should be mowed and bushes should be trimmed regularly throughout spring and summer.
- Lawn should be fertilized during the fall.
- New grass seed should be planted during the fall so that it grows before it is affected by the summer heat.



GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Equipment and supplies:

Gloves - Ladder - Hose - Trash Bags

- Have someone hold the ladder as you climb up to the gutters. Do not pull on the gutters.
- Remove debris from gutters, and rinse gutters clean with the hose.
- Spray the hose into the downspout to remove any debris which may be inside.

HINT: Put a screen overtop downspout to prevent it from clogging with debris.